

Business Management Principles for Scientists 2018 Project Ideas: 2018 Cohort

1. Decision Support – Mass Cytometry Center of Excellence

The Problem: Customers interested in mass cytometry need to decide whether to pay the CIC a fee to complete their project(s) or to pay self-service fees to use the core's equipment and complete the project themselves as part of the MCCE.

The Project: The project team will interview the core managers, past core customers, observe the staff activity, measure the work and processes, and complete a time/value evaluation. The end product will be a tool for decision support: a REDCap survey.

2. Marketing and Capacity Utilization – CISR/Cell Imaging Core

The Problem: CISR has hundreds of users from across the medical center. They need help (a) understanding how to leverage this diverse customer base and (b) how to optimize equipment utilization and other services available from existing equipment.

The Project: The project team will work with CISR to observe the current process, interview and capture knowledge from the current staff, and interview current and past CISR customers. The end product will be a capacity utilization and opportunity study, as well as a marketing strategy to reach new customers and utilize this capacity.

3. Training – Neurochemistry Core

The Problem: The core has 7 people, all highly specialized in either equipment operating procedures or process knowledge. There is limited documentation or procedures and equipment guidelines. There is no process in place for onboarding new staff, initial training of new staff, "certification" of existing staff, and on-going cross training of staff.

The Project: The project team will work with the Neurochemistry Core to observe the current onboarding and training process, interview current staff members on the pros and cons of their past training, and capture knowledge from the current staff on current onboarding and training procedures. The project team will work to build repeatable systems and workflows to meet the onboarding and training needs of the Core, and document and automate these procedures. The team will work to build a "certification" program for staff members. And the team will also work to "automate" these processes to make the overall process more efficient.

4. Marketing – CHTN/Human Tissue

The Problem: There is a gap between the CHTN Core (and the human tissue samples available for collection) and the customers who need these samples. The process is challenged by the real-time nature (non-inventory). Today's limited marketing happens at conferences.

The Project: The project team will study existing marketing and interview current staff members to understand the current marketing procedures and challenges. The end product will include (a) research and creation of a target customer database, (b) marketing strategies for reaching those customers directly, and (c) procedures that address the sensitive messaging surrounding patient consent.

5. Operational Plan for Budgeting Expenses and Controlling Access – CDB Core

The Problem: Access to shared equipment in the CDB Equipment Resource cores is available for departmental labs based in MRB3. Usage of some equipment is fee-based to help cover costs but logging usage is on the honor system. As a result, tracking customer usage and thus proper billing is difficult. Additionally, CDB faculty now occupy parts of floors in two other buildings. There are expenses to be covered without a detailed plan for how this will be done and how much it will cost.

The Project: The project team will observe current operations in the additional faculty spaces, complete time and motion studies, and interview key staff members and customers. They will detail the new anticipated expenses to maintain and operate shared equipment. The end product will be a strategic business plan to cover new expenses and technology recommendations for maintaining the core (i.e., how interlocks, access control devices, and other procedures can improve this process). This study will include studying investment costs (for technology and procedural change) and the expected benefits of those investments.

6. Business Plan/Operational improvements:

Biorepository for multicenter clinical trials: Cardiology Core Lab

The Problem: The Cardiology Core lab is planning to expand the Biorepository for multicenter Cardiovascular Clinical Trials. We currently have four active projects and are facing some challenges such as updating LIMS, freezer space, marketing and customized logistics services.

The Project: The project team will have the opportunity to interview staff members to understand the current operation and to make recommendations on improving operation efficacy. The goal is to help the Core Lab develop a good business plan based on the new ISBER Best Practice: Recommendations for Repositories.